

Message Text

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FOR AMBASSADOR SHULMAN IN GENEVA

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TAGS: CGEN, CASC, SOPN, BGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER VS THE PRESS

REF: MOSCOW 16158

1. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM CHICAGO TRIBUNE ON CRAWFORD-
INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER AFFAIR, BOTH DATELINE MOSCOW:

JUNE 28: INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER HAS DRAWN BITTER CRITICISM
FROM SOME U.S. DIPLOMATS AND BUSINESSMEN HERE FOR WHAT IS
PERCEIVED AS A DELIBERATE FAILURE TO SUPPORT CRAWFORD WITH
ITS ECONOMIC LEVERAGE.

THE AMERICANS BELIEVE THE COMPANY, WHICH SUPPLIES THE SOVIETS
WITH MUCH NEEDED OIL FIELD AND FARM VEHICLES SHOULD HAVE
SUSPENDED DEALINGS WITH THEM TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR
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CRAWFORD, AT LEAST UNTIL HE HAD BEEN ALLOWED AN ATTORNEY
AND TOLD OF THE NATURE OF THE CASE AGAINST HIM.

INSTEAD IN THE TWO WEEKS SINCE CRAWFORD WAS DRAGGED FROM HIS
CAR ON DOWNTOWN STREET AND CONFINED TO A CELL WITH A SOVIET
PRISONER, THE COMPANY HAS HELD ROUTINE NEGOTIATIONS WITH
SOVIET OFFICIALS, WRAPPING UP ONE CONTRACT AND MAKING

SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARD ANOTHER.

JUNE 29: COMPANY OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW REFUSED TO DISCUSS REPORTS FROM WELL-PLACED SOURCES IN THE FOREIGN BUSINESS COMMUNITY HERE THAT IT HAS BEEN CONDUCTING BUSINESS AS USUAL WITH THE SOVIETS DURING CRAWFORD'S CONFINEMENT.

THE SOURCES REPORTED THAT THE COMPANY HAS SIGNED ONE SMALL CONTRACT SINCE CRAWFORD'S ARREST AND ENGAGED IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ON A SECOND, MUCH LARGER ONE . . .

PRIVATELY AMERICAN DIPLOMATS AND BUSINESSMEN HERE HAVE CRITICIZED THE COMPANY'S WILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH THE SOVIETS EVEN BEFORE CRAWFORD WAS PROVIDED WITH A LAWYER OR FULLY INFORMED OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM.

2. BELOW IS TEXT OF NEWSWEEK ARTICLE (JULY 17, 1978):

INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER'S FRANCIS JAY CRAWFORD HAS MAINTAINED A DISCREET SILENCE EVER SINCE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES PAROLED HIM FROM THE MOSCOW PRISON CELL WHERE HE WAS HELD FOR FIFTEEN DAYS FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING THE SOVIET UNION'S CURRENCY-EXCHANGE LAWS. BUT NEWSWEEK'S FRED COLEMAN DISCUSSED CRAWFORD'S EXPERIENCE WITH MANY OF HIS FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES AND WITH WESTERN DIPLOMATS LAST WEEK, AND WHAT EMERGED WAS A PICTURE OF SOVIET DUPLICITY AND CHARGES UNCLASSIFIED

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OF ASTONISHING INDIFFERENCE TO CRAWFORD'S PLIGHT ON THE PART OF INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER AND THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN MOSCOW. COLEMAN REPORTS:

SOVIET POLICE HAS NO DIFFICULTY SEIZING JAY CRAWFORD: THEY SIMPLY DRAGGED THE PLUMP BUSINESSMAN FROM HIS CAR WHILE HE WAS STOPPED AT A RED LIGHT. BUT FLESHING OUT CHARGES OF CURRENCY SPECULATION PROVED MORE DIFFICULT. ACCORDING TO ONE FRIEND, KGB AGENTS SEARCHED CRAWFORD'S HOTEL ROOM "UNTIL IT LOOKED LIKE A HAND GRENADE HAD BEEN SET OFF THERE". STILL, THEY FOUND NOTHING INCRIMINATING -- NO CACHE OF RUBLES, NO ICONS OR ANTIQUES THAT CRAWFORD MIGHT HAVE BOUGHT WITH BLACK-MARKET MONEY. SO THIS FRIEND INSISTS, POLICE SIMPLY MANUFACTURED A CASE AGAINST CRAWFORD. DURING KGB QUESTIONING, CRAWFORD WOULD NAME SOVIET CITIZENS HE KNEW, AND LATER, PRESUMABLY AFTER SOVIET PRESSURE ON THESE ACQUAINTANCES OF CRAWFORD, POLICE WOULD ANNOUNCE THAT THEY HAD SIGNED, INDIVIDUAL STATEMENTS TESTIFYING TO CRAWFORD'S ILLEGAL MONEY DEALINGS.

THROUGHOUT CRAWFORD'S IMPRISONMENT, HE AND HIS FRIENDS BELIEVE, INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER MAINTAINED AN AMAZING

EQUANIMITY, EVEN SENDING IN A NEW MOSCOW SALES MANAGER -
JOHN CHELLMAN - AND PLUNGING AHEAD WITH TALKS ON BUSINESS

AGREEMENTS CRAWFORD HAS SET UP. "WHY DIDN'T HARVESTER
DEMAND THAT THE SOVIETS RELEASE JAY BEFORE GOING AHEAD
WITH THOSE MEETINGS?" ASKS ONE AMERICAN IN MOSCOW.

AFTER CRAWFORD WAS FINALLY RELEASED, HARVESTER PREPARED A
TYPED STATEMENT FOR THE PRESS, ASSERTING MERELY THAT THEIR
MAN HAD NOT "INTENTIONALLY BROKEN SOVIET LAW ". ONLY WHEN
CRAWFORD OBJECTED DID HARVESTER AGREE TO LET HIM TELL
NEWSMEN FLATLY THAT HE WAS INNOCENT. HARVESTER IS NOT THE
ONLY COMPANY TO DRAW CRITICISM FROM CRAWFORD AND HIS
SUPPORTERS. MANY AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN STATIONED IN MOSCOW
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ASKED FOR GUIDANCE FROM THEIR HOME OFFICES AND WERE
DIRECTED NOT TO PROTEST OR THREATEN THE SOVIETS WITH ANY
DISRUPTION IN TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. SINCE CRAWFORD WAS SET
FREE, HE HAS NOTED, NOT A SINGLE AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN HAS
PHONED OR ASK HOW HE IS OR TO OFFER HELP.

STRINGS: HARVESTER EXECUTIVES CLAIM THEY PULLED EVERY
STRING IN THEIR MAN'S BEHALF - EVEN TO ASKING SEN. CHARLES
PERCY OF ILLINOIS TO TALK PERSONALLY WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR
ANATOLY DOBRYNIN. TO BREAK OFF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD HAVE
LEFT THEM WITHOUT ANY LEVERAGE AT ALL OVER THE RUSSIANS,
SAID ONE COMPANY SPOKESMAN: "BESIDES, THE SOVIETS COULD
TURN TO SOMEONE ELSE FOR HEAVY CRAWLER TRACTORS". CHRISTOPHER

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